

# Ross's Term, Though Under Year, Longer Than Average in Dry Office

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When Captain Edwin S. Ross withdraws from the New Jersey prohibition enforcement field, in keeping with present plans of Washington officials, he can find consolation in these words of his chief, Commissioner James M. Doran, uttered sometime ago:

"The job of prohibition administrator in New Jersey," said the commissioner as he looked over the record of appointments and disappointments here since the office was established nine and a half years ago, "is enough to wear anybody out in a year. We regard it as one of the hardest spots in the entire prohibition administration."

And if the departing administrator, who is expected to take up duties in some yet undesignated sector, cares for still more consolation, perhaps he can find it in the fact that his administration has lasted longer than the average. He was sworn in last October 1, which would give him a term here of eleven months up to September.

## Twelfth in Office.

He is the twelfth administrator since the New Jersey office was opened March 19, 1920. The average term of the twelve has been about nine and a half months.

The first prohibition administrator was James A. Edgerton of Nutley, a close friend of the late William Jennings Bryan. He organized the first unit and started it in operation, but remained here only three months, leaving June 21, 1920. Succeeding him was George W. VanNote, school teacher of Ocean and Monmouth counties. He lasted until August, 1921, quitting with the declaration that he could have carried with him \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 if he had wanted to head a dishonest administration.

Charles H. Brown, farmer-Quaker of Gloucester, appointed under pressure from Senator Frelinghuysen, came next. Under Brown at different times were

Theodore (Two Gun) Schweitzer, Samille H. Con'e and Green Miller, who introduced rough-and-tumble tactics into what was probably the most exciting enforcement era of the twelve.

## A Procession.

After Brown resigned December 14, 1922, William D. Moss of Cincinnati served for a time. Then former Assemblyman Adrian G. Chamberlin was appointed, Senator Edge having prevailed upon President Harding. Though Chamberlin conducted 4,892 raids in 1924 alone, the drys fought him stubbornly until he resigned July 1, 1925. Reuben B. Sams of Philadelphia followed him and remained until the next month, when New Jersey was put under regional control, with headquarters in Philadelphia.

There were two successive regional directors, William G. Murdock and Frederick Baird. An assistant to Murdock, Captain Jesse Lee Thompson, was most active in Jersey, but declared afterward that his way here had been blocked by politicians and "higher ups."

Colonel Ira L. Reeves of Maplewood took over the job in September, 1926, with return of the state administrator plan. Veteran of several wars, engineer, 205 pounds of energy, he tackled the enforcement business with a zeal that brought him many troubles. He quit May 24, 1927, declaring he had been heckled out of office.

## Secrecy.

Deputy Commissioner James E. Jones came to direct the state at this time, adopting a policy of fewer and bigger raids. Colonel Arthur J. Hanlon arrived July 1, 1927, and remained fourteen months. His rule was one of the strictest military discipline and secrecy. 'Tis said even waste paper in his office was filed for fear it might fall into the hands of the wets.

Colonel Hanlon passed on to Porto Rico with the appearance of Captain Ross.